



Before submitting scripts, ask yourself these five questions

by Steve Willis

Let me start with a confession: I'm not writing much these days. At the beginning of the year, I made the following resolution: "Write less, submit more." As I had stockpiled quite a few unproduced scripts, I decided to devote extra time this year to submitting my work. My goal was 100 submissions to theatres, play competitions, grant organizations, directors, and producers. Five months into the year, I've just mailed submission #71.

I don't know if any of us actually enjoy the process of script submission. Most of us struggle to find time to write our plays. We don't relish the idea of taking time to copy scripts, address envelopes, and stand in line at the post office. Luckily, e-mail has reduced the chore (and bore) of submitting work. Now you can send your play as an e-mail attachment in a matter of seconds. More importantly, e-mail avoids the expense of paper, copying and binding costs, enve-

lopes, and postage. Although a number of theatres and competitions still require hard copies, e-mail submission is becoming more popular and is already a standard with many grant agencies.

Whether you're submitting a script electronically or the old-fashioned way, the process is usually rather simple. However, it does require a bit of organization and attention to detail. Here's a checklist to get you started:

1. Will your play will be of interest to the theatre or competition? Look at the theatre's web site to see what types of plays they produce most often. If their most recent season was made up of six comedies, you can be certain that they won't be interested in your contemporary adaptation of *Medea*. If the group sponsoring a play competition has an interest in historic dramas, you're wasting your time if you submit your latest romantic comedy.

2. Have you read the submission guidelines—and followed

Next Meeting

*Wednesday, June 9,
7–9 p.m.*

*City Arts Conference Room,
Greensboro Cultural Center*

Bring writing assignments, works in progress, or just a friend. Come to read, listen, and critique. Meetings are free and open to the public.

them? Not following submission guidelines gives the theatre or competition the right to reject your script before anyone reads beyond the title page. For example, don't send your play in Arial if the guidelines specify that plays must be typed in Times New Roman. If a particular type of binding is required, take the time to secure your script in this manner.

3. Is your contact information provided on the title page of your script? Unless the submission guidelines request otherwise, always display your name, postal address, phone number, e-mail address, and fax number prominently on your title page.

4. Have you included a synopsis of your play? Another confession: I hate writing synopses of my work. Basically, your synopsis should be simple, straightforward, and short (no more than one page).

5. Have you provided a list of characters? Having served on several play-reading committees, I know first-hand how frustrating it can be to read a play without the benefit of a character list. Keep the descriptions of your characters

North Carolina New Play Project

The N.C. New Play Project has new guidelines and a new deadline: **July 14**. We are currently accepting scripts. The new guidelines include...

- Previously produced works are accepted (no Equity productions).
- Electronic submissions are accepted.
- Playwrights may submit up to three (3) one-acts and two (2) full-length scripts; no more than three (3) plays may be submitted.

The prize is \$500 (thanks to the Mark Gilbert Estate) plus a workshop production.

Pegasus Project takes flight

Our Pegasus Project is currently under way, with half a dozen high school students working with our own **Chris Tilley** and local playwright Kim Moore to write, rehearse, and perform an original musical in two weeks. Don't miss this "sure to amaze" performance on June 18 at 7:30 p.m. in the Greensboro Cultural Center. This program is designed to take the place of our Young Dramatists' Playground, and with the com-

bined talent of **Chris Tilley** and Kim Moore, it is certain to be a dynamic success!

Moore will return on June 21–25 to guide another team of high school students through the process of developing their own 10-minute plays, which will be performed on June 25 at 7:30 p.m. in the Greensboro Cultural Center. Spaces are still available in this workshop; interested students are encouraged to apply.

When last we met...

At our May 12 meeting, we read assignments from **Bob Webb** and **Mark Smith-Soto**. Then we enjoyed a wonderful set of "works-in-progress," including **Anthony**

Garcia Copian's "A Cheating Nirvana," **Steve Willis'** "We Never Close," **Grace Ellis'** "Remote Control," and **Shelley Segal's** whimsical "Save 'Em for the End."

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inScript

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Director

Stephen D. Hyers

Editor

Katrina Breitenbach

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Send out your scripts, proposals

Paul Green Foundation

The Paul Green Foundation is now accepting proposals for the New Play Project Grant. The grant is \$3000 for a project period of January 1, 2005, to December 31, 2005. Applications must be postmarked by August 1, 2004. Application forms are online at www.paulgreen.org. Please note that additional application materials are required and cannot be e-mailed. Incomplete applications or those postmarked after the deadline will not be considered. Recipients will be notified in November and must accept or reject the grant by December 1. Payment will be made after January 1, 2005.

Vital Theatre Company

Vital Theatre Company accepts scripts that can be staged in one of our small, 50-seat, black box theatres. One submission at a time per playwright will be accepted. For Vital Signs, our one-act new works festival, we consider plays

(10–30 minutes) that have not had a professional production in New York City. Scripts for Vital Signs can be submitted from January 1–June 30. Selected playwrights will be notified by August 15 for a November/December production. Note: The Spring 2004 festival has been cancelled. All plays submitted for that festival will be considered for the Fall festival.

Please include the following materials for all submissions in this order:

1. A cover page: name, address, telephone and e-mail
2. A brief synopsis of your script with a character breakdown
3. A bio and/or résumé
4. A complete development/reading/production history
5. The script

If you would like the script returned, please include an appropriate SASE. If you would like notification of the receipt of your script, please include an SASP. If you have a director with whom

you would like to work, you can include his/her name and information with your submission. Otherwise, Vital Theatre Company has a growing pool of directors who would be available to discuss your script if it is selected.

Please mail your submission to

Vital Theatre Company

Literary Department

432 West 42nd St., 3rd Fl.

New York, NY 10036

Please do not e-mail your materials. We are unable to print all the scripts we receive. We will try our best to reply within six months. If you have any questions, contact us at scripts@vitaltheatre.org.

Essential Theatre

Full-length plays accepted. Send query with synopsis and sample dialogue to Daniel Moore, Artistic Director, 1606 George Avenue, Richmond, VA 23220. Online, visit www.essentialtheatre.org.

See **Deadlines**, page 4



The 11th Annual N.C. New Play Project, *A Mouthfulla Sacco & Vanzetti* by Michael A. Smith.

Playscript publishers online

Brooklyn Publishers:

www.brookpub.com.

I.E. Clark Publications:

www.ieclark.com.

Contemporary Drama Service:

www.contemporarydrama.com.

Dramatic Publishing:

www.dramaticpublishing.com.

Dramatists Play Service:

www.dramatists.com.

Encore Performance:

www.encoreplay.com.

Eserver (online publisher since 1990):

eserver.org.

Have Scripts: www.havescripts.com.

Heinemann (classroom resource books): www.heinemann.com.

Heuer Publishers (educational and community theatres):

www.hitplays.com.

Hollow Hills Publishing (in England):

www.hollowhillspublishing.com.

One Act Play Depot:

www3.sk.sympatico.ca/frasm.

Original Works Publishing (online publisher):

www.originalworksonline.com.

Pioneer Drama Service:

www.pioneerdrama.com.

Playscripts Inc.:

www.playscripts.com.

ProPlay (online publisher):

www.singlelane.com/proplay.

Samuel French Inc.:

www.samuel french.com.

Scene 4 (online publisher):

www.scene4.com.

Smith & Kraus Publishers Inc.:

www.smithkraus.com.

Member news

Dwayne Yancey was one of four finalists in the Peterson Playwriting Competition sponsored by Catawba College.

Steve Willis' new play, *Falling So Slowly*, will have a three-week run in Prahran, Melbourne, Australia at Church Off Church as part of Midsumma—Melbourne's Gay & Lesbian Festival.

Scripts

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brief—one or two adjectives or a couple of short sentences.

In addition, several excellent submission tips appear in Linda Eisenstein's article "17 Surefire Ways to Get Your Play Rejected," which is available online at <http://my.en.com/~herone/home.html>. Also check out Richard Toscan's informative site, The Playwriting Seminars (<http://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/artweb/playwriting/seminar.html>), which contains a wealth of information.

If you have questions about the script submission process, feel free to contact me at SWillis07@aol.com. I'll be happy to try to answer any specific questions you may have.

Sponsors & Friends

Oates & Company

Active Members

William Black
Richard H. Brashear
Katrina Breitenbach
Eddie Cope
Sheryle Criswell
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Bill Davis
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Todd Fisher
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Victor H. Garrou, Jr.

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Cherry Nguyen-Hubris
Ann Marie Oliva
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Andy Ralston-Asumendi
David Ratcliffe
Rebecca Renteria
Lynn Veach Sadler
Deborah Seabrooke
Shelley Stolaroff Segal
Mark Smith-Soto

Zach Stinnett
Sam Stone
Christopher Tilley
Axel Tolsdorf
Wyatt Vanhoy
Bob Webb
Jillian Marie Weise
Ludy Marvin Wilkie
Steve Willis
Dwayne Yancey
J. Christopher Yount
Jini Zlatniski

If you have recently paid dues or made a donation and your name is not listed here, please contact the Greensboro Playwrights' Forum at (336) 335-6426 or stephen.hyers@greensboro-nc.gov.

Dramatists' Playground offers a daring experience

It's that time again to give up one day to the writing, developing, rehearsing, and performing of our annual "World's Newest Play." The workshop—aptly named the "Dramatists' Playground"—will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, July 24, and will conclude that

evening with the performances of three unique plays at the City Arts Studio Theatre.

Admission to the performance and to the workshop is free. There are no auditions for this project; we accept participants by application and seek a diverse, daring group of brave souls. Applications are currently being accepted for actors, directors, and playwrights for this unique experience that will have you saying, "24-hour plays are for sissies." And as always, we will provide a new twist to the day's project—but you will have to attend to find out what it is.

GPF Play Catalog

The GPF new play catalog is open to all members. It is available online and is mailed out periodically during the year.

Deadlines

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Manhattan Drama Collective

Currently accepting ten-minute, one-acts, full-lengths, musicals. Send query with synopsis to Patricia Watt, Artistic Director, 27 West 86th Street, New York, NY 10024. For more information, call (212) 595-0924.

Stage 3 Theatre

Stage 3 Theatre is accepting new full-length plays for its upcoming 8th Annual Festival of New Plays in October 2004. Entries must be postmarked by July 15, 2004. Three finalists receive rehearsed readings (expenses paid). Winner receives full production with royalties. Go to www.stage3.org for submission guidelines.

New Play House

Dedicated to the development of new plays and new playwrights, NPH is seeking full-length play submissions for its 2005 debut season, which will feature two black box productions and two to four staged readings. We are looking for highly theatrical non-musicals with a maximum cast of four. E-mail synopsis, bio, and script

(PDF, Word, or Final Draft) to newplayhouse@yahoo.com, Attn: Jonah Sea Knight, Artistic Director. Deadline: Friday, July 2, 2004.

New Branch Theatre Company

Seeking original scripts of all types, including Christian themes and musicals. Send script to New Branch Theatre Company, c/o Dionne Hawkins, Artistic Director, P.O. Box 1568, Oak Park, IL 60304-1568.

Flint City Theatre

Now accepting original script submissions for the 2004–2005 season: ten-minute, one-act, and full-length plays. Scripts will be considered for public staged readings workshops and/or production at FCT. Selected playwrights will be invited to share their input in the process from start to finish with the director, actors, and designers. Deadline: July 30, 2004. Online, visit www.flintcitytheatre.com.

Playwrights' Circle

Currently accepting new ten-minute, one-acts, full-lengths, musicals, children's plays, including submissions for the Palm Springs International Playwriting Festival and the Palm Springs

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Assignments

This month: Write a short play with 2–3 characters. One of the characters is taking the picture of another, who adamantly does not want his/her picture taken. This should be the surface argument; there should be a stronger argument in the subtext. Let the characters start the argument about the picture, and let them reveal the real argument underneath. Enjoy!

Last month: Write a play where there is a gun on a table, a portrait, and a person who talks to him/herself.

National Short Play Festival. Send to Marilee Warner, Artistic Director, 457 N. Palm Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92262. Online, visit www.PlaywrightsCircleUSA.com.

Radiant Theatre Productions

Seeking ten-minute, one-acts, full-lengths, children's plays, adaptations, and radio plays "on women's issues." Send two copies of script to Anna Soderberg, Artistic Director, 6629 SE Rhone St., Portland, OR 97206. Online, visit www.radianttheatre.com.

Theatre @ Boston Court

Currently seeking full-length plays and musicals. Send to Bryan Davidson & Tom Jacobson, Co-Lit Managers, P.O. Box 60187, Pasadena, CA 91116. Online, visit www.bostoncourt.com.

Cross Currents Culture

Currently accepting full-length scripts for contest. Deadline is June 30. Please include \$5 reading fee or \$10 for unlimited submissions. Include a letter-sized SASE for notification. The prize is \$50 and a showcase production. Send to Bill Clause, 6117 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, MO 64110. Online, visit www.crosscurrentsculture.org.